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## Second Committee

**Summary record of the 23rd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 26 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Mr. Donckel (Vice-Chair) ..... (Luxembourg)

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*In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Donckel (Luxembourg) took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Agenda item 61: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources** (A/66/78-E/2011/13)

1. **Ms. Khalaf** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing document A/66/78-E/2011/13 and accompanying her statement with a slide presentation, described the plight of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory using detailed statistics. She referred to the deaths, injuries, arbitrary arrests, detentions, population displacement and property destruction and confiscation inflicted by Israel, the occupying Power; the Israeli settlements, settler violence, mobility restrictions, closure policies, and exploitation, endangerment and depletion of Palestinian natural resources and the environment; the traumatic conditions created in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli blockade; and the dire situation of the Palestinian economy and social sectors. In occupied Syrian Golan, Israel pursued de facto annexation policies and discriminated against the Syrian Arab citizens in the areas of employment, irrigation and taxation. She urged the international community to end the Israeli occupation and restore the inalienable rights of the population concerned.

2. **Mr. Aloumi** (Kuwait) expressed the hope that the Second Committee would give due consideration to the information provided in the introductory statement.

3. **Mr. Khalil** (Egypt) said that, within its area of responsibility, the Second Committee should formulate new recommendations on how to end the suffering of the Arab population whose plight had been described.

4. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine) said that the Israeli occupation prevented international aid from helping the Palestinian people to achieve its development goals and safeguard its resources; and asked the Under-Secretary-General how the United Nations and the Member States could use the information that she had provided in order to take responsible action to put an end to that occupation.

5. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic), noting that Israel had prevented Second Committee representatives from entering the occupied territory, asked how ESCWA could provide the Arab peoples living under occupation with new means of communication in order to enable them to report on the economic, social and humanitarian problems that they faced. He further suggested that reports by ESCWA should be included in the monthly briefing submitted by the Secretariat to the Security Council on security in the Middle East.

6. **Ms. Khalaf** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), replying to the questions asked by the preceding speakers, said that the organizations of the United Nations system had been endeavouring for decades to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians under occupation. Such efforts were proving ineffectual. The only effective solution would be to end the occupation, which constituted an anomaly in the post-colonial world and violated international law and international decisions, including Security Council resolutions. The Israeli occupying authorities should be held accountable for what was happening in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Golan Heights. Yet many turned a blind eye to the illegal Israeli settlement activity. United Nations organizations, including ESCWA and all other relevant funds and agencies, would continue to try to reduce the hardships endured by the occupied populations.

7. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage on a general discussion on the item.

8. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine), said that the violations of international law and United Nations resolutions by the occupying Power, Israel, included killing of Palestinian civilians, arbitrary arrests, confiscation of land, destruction of property, demolition of homes and restrictions on the movement of people and goods. Those actions hindered the growth of the Palestinian economy and undermined its development.

9. Israel also persisted in its attempts to change the character, status and demographics of the Occupied Palestinian Territory through its construction of illegal settlement and of the apartheid annexation wall in flagrant violation of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. By so doing it had severely restricted the Palestinian people's access to national resources, and the resulting depletion and

degradation of water resources and land and air pollution would have long-term environmental and public health effects.

10. In the past year, the pace of construction of settlements and the level of Israeli military operations and of attacks on the Palestinian people by settlers had doubled. In their barbaric and brutal raids, settlers were looting crops, flooding agricultural lands and uprooting trees: since the start of 2011 more than 8,000 olive trees, the cultivation of which was part of the Palestinian cultural heritage and provided the livelihoods of 100,000 Palestinian families, had been destroyed.

11. The Palestinian Government, through its programme entitled "Palestine: Ending the occupation, Establishing the State" and in cooperation with donor countries, had stepped up support for the affected areas through building, repair and development projects and through relief, particularly in East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and the districts isolated by the annexation wall and the expansion of illegal settlements. The goal was to enable the population to withstand the Israeli scheme to displace the Palestinians from their homes and workplaces. The Government had also formed special ministerial committees to deal with water and natural resource issues and the preservation of the environment in the face of illegal Israeli policies and practices.

12. Many friendly countries provided support in several areas in order to help to improve the dire social, economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. According to recent United Nations, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports, Israeli occupation was the only obstacle to Palestine's economic, social and institutional development. The international community as a whole must compel Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by international law, international treaties and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which had affirmed the right of the Palestinian people and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan to sovereignty over their natural resources.

13. **Mr. Al-Hamadi** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the report prepared by ESCWA documented Israel's arbitrary and barbaric policies, which blatantly violated international law, international humanitarian law and numerous United Nations resolutions. Those policies affected Palestinian and Syrian citizens in every aspect of their lives, including sovereignty over their natural resources. The continuing occupation, the illegal construction of settlements and the inhumane blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip all contributed to a growing humanitarian crisis. Palestinians were denied access to water, basic social services, employment and markets. The movement of persons, aid and commercial goods was severely restricted by closures and checkpoints. Israel had continued to exploit natural resources and pollute the environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. In particular, nuclear waste had been buried under Jabal al-Shaikh in the Syrian Golan.

14. In 2010, Israel had expropriated 8,407.5 dunams of land and destroyed a further 1,532 dunams in the West Bank in order to expand settlements. Homes in Jerusalem were being systematically demolished and excavations were taking place at holy sites, the objective being to change the demographic and legal situation. In the occupied Syrian Golan, illegal settlements were being constructed on agricultural land belonging to Syrians.

15. Despite the Advisory Opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice and acknowledged by the General Assembly in resolution ES-10/15, construction of the separation wall had continued. Some 87 per cent of the wall was located in the West Bank, including Jerusalem; its purpose was to deprive the Palestinians of sovereignty over their resources and allow Israel to benefit from them. Israel extracted 80 per cent of the estimated potential of Palestinian aquifers. In the occupied Syrian Golan, water was sold to Syrian farmers at exorbitant prices, land was confiscated and trees were uprooted. There was discrimination against Syrians in the issuance of building permits.

16. The resulting economic situation, unemployment and displacement of families were devastating. People in the occupied Palestinian territories were deprived of their basic rights owing to Israeli aggression and violence. The international community must compel Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.

17. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan) said that Israel continued to subject Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan to the most brutal forms of repression

and aggression. Israel imposed restrictions not only on the movement of people and goods, but also on the operations of aid agencies, thereby hindering the supply of aid to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Israeli closure policy had led to an increase in poverty, with economic and social life degraded further by land seizures, settlement building and construction of the separation wall. The latter had turned Palestine into one big prison, in violation of international law pursuant to the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004, and had divided the West Bank into dozens of isolated cantons.

18. Israel consumed 91 per cent of the West Bank's water resources, leaving the Palestinians with 9 per cent for their own needs. Those actions, together with Israel's seizure of agricultural land for settlement construction and its restrictions on imports and exports, had deprived the Palestinians of food security. Public health had also deteriorated owing to the lack of a regular fuel and electricity supply, curfews and travel restrictions.

19. Israel had continued to build settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan, whose annexation was illegal under international law. The Arab population of the Syrian Golan was subjected to land seizures, imprisonment, attacks on agricultural land and natural resources and the threat of land mines.

20. Israeli violations of international law and human rights had led to the collapse of Palestinian infrastructure and the deterioration of economic and social conditions. His delegation therefore called upon the international community to compel Israel to comply with resolutions of international legitimacy, withdraw immediately from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and compensate the Palestinian and Syrian peoples for the damage they had sustained.

21. **Ms. Zalkaply** (Malaysia), noting that the Israeli occupation constrained the existence and functioning of Palestinian Authority institutions and thereby aggravated the economic and social hardships inflicted on the Palestinian population, and that for every Israeli fatality 19 Palestinians were killed, said that although mediation was the only means of providing a sustainable resolution to all conflicts and crises, patience and prudence must not result in paralysis. Regrettably, the international community was unable to ensure the exercise of the Palestinians' economic rights despite 180 resolutions adopted so far on Palestine by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The barriers to economic and social development in the Syrian Golan, which were the result of Israeli occupation, were also deplorable.

22. Malaysia supported the application of Palestine to become a full member of the United Nations. The relevant resolution should be based on a two-State solution reflecting the security concerns of both parties. It was to be hoped that a peaceful end to the crisis would lead to an immediate cessation of the suffering of the people of Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan.

23. **Ms. Al Meaini** (United Arab Emirates) said that Israel's actions had resulted in the deterioration of infrastructure, agricultural land, sanitation and the environment. Owing to closures and restrictions, poverty was growing in the occupied Arab territories, and unemployment had reached the highest level since 2000. Israel's military aggression against the Gaza Strip between February 2009 and February 2010 had led to the death or injury of thousands of civilians, mostly women and children. The blockade imposed by Israel since 2007 had greatly aggravated the economic and humanitarian situation.

24. Israel continued its illegal policy of settlement expansion and its attempts to impose facts on the ground by constructing the illegal separation wall, building settlements on occupied Palestinian land and bulldozing agricultural land and wells. Its seizure of Palestinian property in East Jerusalem sought to alter the city's historic character and identity, in contravention of international law. Israel continued to occupy the Syrian Golan, confiscate land and natural resources, build settlements and follow a policy of discrimination and repression against the Arab population, all of which was designed to Judaize the region and change its Arab character.

25. Her Government affirmed its solidarity with the Palestinian Authority and its President, and supported the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to their natural resources and to establish an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. In particular, it supported the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to gain international recognition for an independent Palestinian State with full membership in the United Nations, something that did not preclude the resumption of negotiations. His Government further affirmed Syria's right to recover the occupied Golan. It therefore called

upon the international community to put pressure on Israel to cease its policy of aggression; lift the blockade on Gaza immediately; withdraw fully from all occupied Arab territory, including the occupied Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese territory.

26. The Occupied Palestinian Territory was the foremost recipient of aid from the Emirates. She called on the international community to assist the Palestinian people in fulfilling its basic needs and reconstructing the infrastructure destroyed by Israel.

27. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the ESCWA report shed new light on the economic and social suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan, including the exploitation and squandering of their natural resources. The inhabitants of those areas were deprived of the most basic requirements for a decent life. They were therefore far from realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose importance had repeatedly been stressed at the general debate of the General Assembly by supporters of the terrorist entity.

28. The economic blockade of 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza had resulted in a severe shortage of the basic necessities of life, preventing reconstruction and halting the supply of humanitarian aid to Gaza. By imposing collective punishment on Gaza, Israel had shown its contempt for international public opinion.

29. Israel, the occupying Power since 1967, had applied its own laws in the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which had determined Israel's annexation of the Golan to be null and void. Israel had constructed and expanded settlements in the Golan, seized Syrian-owned land, imposed exorbitant prices, uprooted fruit-bearing trees, bulldozed agricultural land and damaged the environment by burying nuclear waste there. His Government had written to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly on 19 October 2010 (A/65/520) to draw attention to those violations.

30. Israel also drew water from Lake Masada in the occupied Syrian Golan and sold the bulk of it to settlements at reduced prices, causing an estimated $30 million in losses to the Syrian inhabitants for the year 2010. Such actions were part of Israeli policies designed to deprive the local population of natural resources, in contravention of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

31. The Second Committee should send a clear message to the entire world that the occupation was a violation of all international norms and laws. His delegation rejected the position of certain States, which portrayed themselves as the defenders and guardians of human rights but, whenever a draft resolution on the topic was discussed, objected strongly to any mention of the suffering and human rights violations of those living under Israeli occupation. Although the General Assembly might be unable to enforce its resolutions on the Israeli occupation, that did not diminish their importance. States should not shirk their moral responsibility towards those living under foreign occupation and the United Nations should take all necessary measures to compel Israel to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), put an end to the occupation and compensate the Palestinian and Syrian inhabitants for their losses.

32. **Ms. Hussein** (Maldives) stated that only through formal international recognition of the State of Palestine, living side by side and in peace with Israel, could social normalcy, legal equality, economic opportunity and sustainable development be achieved in the region. Despite Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005 and a slight easing of the blockade on the area in 2010, Gaza remained under a state of occupation, while movement and economic activities in the West Bank were subject to even stricter control.

33. The Maldives was concerned at the alarming rate of settlement expansion, which deprived Palestinians of access to water, land and energy. Moreover, land, water and air were being degraded and polluted, undermining the future sustainable development and welfare of the population. Gaza's sole water source was an aquifer that was contaminated with dangerous levels of various chemicals, while in the West Bank more than 300,000 people had to rely on cisterns to catch polluted rain water, or use tankers at an exorbitant cost. While the international community was vigilant in seeking to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions of all Palestinians, for the territory to move forward, the State of Palestine should have the primary responsibility for building its infrastructure and ensuring social harmony, security, economic opportunities, fiscal viability and the protection of the natural environment.

34. **Mr. Aloumi** (Kuwait) said that Israel's continued oppressive and inhumane infringements of the rights of the Palestinian people and usurpation of their economic and social resources reflected the declared policy of Israel as an entity above the law. Israel systematically pursued settlement schemes designed to Judaize Palestinian areas rich in natural resources by displacing their inhabitants and to alter the demography of Jerusalem. Such actions were a violation, inter alia, of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, while the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip was a violation of article 33 of that Convention and impeded the revival of its economy.

35. He called on the international community to continue to exert pressure on Israel in order to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and to establish a State of their own, with East Jerusalem as its capital. An end must be put to the Israeli occupation of all Arab lands seized in June 1967, including the Syrian Golan, and to the continued Israeli violations of the sovereignty of Lebanon.

36. **Mr. Hashim** (Saudi Arabia) said that the Arab-Israeli conflict had been exacerbated by Israel's persistence in seizing Palestinian land. Through the Arab Peace Initiative launched by Saudi Arabia in 2002, the Arab States had clearly stated their commitment to a just and comprehensive peace based on international law. However, that outcome could be realized only when Israel withdrew from all occupied territories, including the Syrian Golan and the occupied Lebanese territory.

37. In disregard of international opinion, Israel had continued its illegal settlement policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Settlements now surrounded most of the cities of the West Bank and controlled half of its water resources, making it difficult for the Palestinian Authority to work effectively. Most States, including permanent members of the Security Council, had expressed their opposition to settlement activities. That consensus should now be embodied in a clear collective position; Israel must understand that it was not exempt from the principles of international law.

38. Israel's separation wall was intended not for security purposes, but rather to consolidate Israel's hold over East Jerusalem, control water resources and increase the number of settlements. Security could be achieved only through respect for human rights and the rule of law.

39. The blockade had made the Gaza Strip into one large prison, preventing the population from exercising its rights or accessing resources and services. A generation of children was growing up under siege with the experience of devastation and international neglect. The Security Council must ensure that the blockade was lifted.

40. In view of Israel's obduracy and the stalling of the peace process, his Government called on all Member States to recognize the State of Palestine along the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to grant it full membership in the United Nations.

41. **Mr. Al-Shanfari** (Oman) said that along with other Arab States and the international community, Oman had encouraged negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the occupying Power, Israel, thus far without success. The international community had a responsibility to support the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along the borders of 4 June 1967 with full membership in the United Nations, as part and parcel of the Organization's commitment to upholding international peace and security.

42. Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, the Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese territories bred resentment and anger in the region. At a time when the United Nations was working to provide shelter, protect biodiversity, combat food insecurity and liberalize global trade, Israel was demolishing homes, uprooting trees, preventing farmers from reaching their land and imposing an economic blockade. Settlement activities were the most pressing challenge for the international community as it sought to confront Israel's obduracy. All Member States should take effective action to support the right of the Palestinian people to independence by promoting a permanent peace based on a fair partnership and equality between peoples.

43. **Mr. Alseedi** (Iraq) denounced the disastrous social and economic impact of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan, and the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupation forces, as documented in the report under discussion. Israel's policy of aggression against the inhabitants and the infrastructure had undermined

peace efforts which would have brought about justice and an improved management of the region's resources. By imposing an inhuman blockade on Palestinian territories and holding Palestinians hostage on their own land, the Israeli forces had outperformed all other occupation forces in history through their use of specialized technical methods to exterminate the defenceless Palestinian people, particularly children. He expressed the hope that an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict would materialize in the near future on the basis of international law and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and in accordance with the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative for a just and comprehensive peace. He called for the peaceful coexistence of Israel and Palestine as two sovereign States enjoying security and democracy together on the basis of equality.

44. **Ms. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that as a result of the occupation, the appropriation of natural resources and the closures and blockade affecting the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Palestine's economy was one of the most dependent on foreign aid. Land seizures, the uprooting of trees and the destruction of property, together with collective punishment, blockades and closures, represented a blatant challenge to international agreements and United Nations resolutions.

45. Her delegation therefore called for the cessation of all measures aggravating the economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinians in the Occupied Arab Territory, and urged the international community to continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Palestinian Authority and people. The Palestinian people had a right to self-determination, the establishment of an independent State and sovereignty over their territory and resources.

46. **Mr. Kurer** (Libya) said that the ESCWA report showed that Israel's recourse to killings, expulsions, blockades and arbitrary imprisonment against Palestinians had increased. The Israeli regime had no regard for international law and the United Nations was unable to enforce its resolutions aimed at ending the occupation and preventing the destruction of vital Palestinian infrastructure.

47. The occupying Power continued to murder, imprison and expel; to demolish homes, destroy residential areas and bulldoze fields; and to seize water resources, expropriate agricultural land and impose blockades and closures. The purpose of those actions, which caused economic, social and psychological damage in the occupied territories, was to starve the Palestinian people and to force them to relinquish their rights, including the right of return.

48. Israel had continued to tighten its grip on the Palestinian people. The separation wall broke the contiguity of Palestinian areas and prevented people from reaching their places of work. The separation of Palestinian land from water resources had impeded olive production and caused many farmers to leave their land. When completed, the wall would isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and make access to everyday services more difficult, especially as the military occupation authorities had declared the areas between the wall and the Green Line to be closed.

49. Such policies had serious economic and social repercussions. The blockade had restricted transfers of cash from the West Bank to Gaza, halting private sector investment there. Repeated Israeli incursions in the border areas had caused serious damage to agricultural land and the water grid. The offshore area in which fishing was permitted had been reduced to only three miles. That had led to economic collapse, high levels of unemployment and widespread poverty. It was refugee women and children who bore the greatest burden; they suffered from malnutrition, disease and a lack of health care.

50. The occupation authorities continued to refuse to allow the Golan population expelled in 1967 to return. Settlements continued to be built in the Golan Heights, lands bulldozed, fruit-bearing trees owned by Syrian Arabs uprooted and the marketing of their produce obstructed. The occupation authorities also controlled water resources, thereby severely restricting the agricultural activity of Syrian inhabitants.

51. Affirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the right of return of the refugees, his delegation called upon the international community to shoulder its moral and historical responsibility to support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

52. **Ms. Irman** (Indonesia) said that the Note by the Secretary-General was an unpleasant reminder that a number of countries and territories were still unable to exercise their right to development because of foreign

occupation. The current meeting of the Second Committee, held against the backdrop of the Palestinian people's continuous suffering at the hands of the occupants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, would be meaningless if it could not help the victims to tackle the problems that they faced. Indonesia supported the Palestinian people in their legitimate quest for the exercise of their inalienable rights to an independent and sovereign State, to development and to the use of their natural resources. Lastly, Indonesia firmly believed in a two-State solution as a firm basis of strategic importance for a peaceful and just regional architecture in the Middle East.

53. **Mr. Raidan** (Israel) said that the Second Committee, having capitulated to the demands of certain Member States whose sole mission was to disparage Israel, was regrettably again wasting time on an issue irrelevant to its mandate. The predictable conclusions of the Committee, which every year endorsed an inflammatory resolution condemning the State of Israel, would be biased and flawed. Many of the Member States that paid lip service to the Palestinians did nothing to improve life for the Palestinian people on the ground. In contrast, Israel had concretely shown its commitment to the progress of Palestinian society and to the development of the Palestinian economy and infrastructure. Refuting the misguided allegations directed at Israel would be easy but would not contribute to responsible professional discourse.

54. Every country that had used the Second Committee as a forum to bash Israel had benefited from Israel's contributions to the advancement of sustainable development and cooperation among States and knew that it prospered as a result of Israel's state-of-the-art innovations and technological know-how, which had been developed to deal with matters at the heart of the Committee's work and goals. As a small country with a shortage of natural resources, Israel had been compelled over the years to confront such problems as water scarcity and desertification by developing revolutionary agricultural techniques involving salt- and drought-resistant plant species; animal husbandry for extreme climates; advanced greenhouse, aquaculture, afforestation and land-reclamation technologies; and waste-water recycling systems. Those technologies were widely exported.

55. Israel shared the vital interests of its neighbours in protecting the natural environment. Cooperation would be greatly enhanced if the Palestinian Authority proceeded with the numerous projects that had already been approved in relevant meetings. Related fields of Israeli-Palestinian collaboration included the development of energy infrastructure and joint agricultural projects promoted by Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV). The wide range of existing Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in matters related to natural resources utterly contradicted the impressions conveyed in the current debate. The Palestinian Authority declined to participate in the programmes described and the sponsors of the resolution presented would rather ignore the real issues in order to advance their own narrow political agendas.

56. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the report and the various statements had clearly not been enough to get their message across to the representative of Israel. The Israeli occupiers did not want to acknowledge the facts. Instead, the Israeli delegation criticized the work of the Committee and tried to portray itself as the object of attacks. Israel was not being attacked, but should understand that the occupation must come to an end. Israeli technology had been developed at the expense of the resources of an entire people. The desert bloomed at the expense of the Bedouin population. Israeli technologies for exploiting scarce resources were in fact stealing Palestinian resources, including water. Palestine had opted for peace and negotiations. Negotiation with the occupying Power did not imply acceptance or legitimization of the status quo. The Palestinian Authority's cooperation in various domains in the interests of the Palestinian people should not be used to legitimize the occupation.

57. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the occupying Israeli entity was attempting to sow confusion regarding the work of the Committee and the facts contained in the report. Israel affected to reach out for peace and cooperation with the peoples of the world. In reality, it was responsible for the longest and most heinous occupation in modern times. It persistently violated the Fourth Geneva Convention, ignored the relevant United Nations resolutions and held itself to be above international law and the will of the international community. It was ludicrous for the representative of the occupying entity to describe the

theft of water and the destruction of natural resources as advanced technology.

58. Israel had submitted draft resolutions on such issues as agriculture at a time when its occupying forces were starving the Arab population, destroying their natural resources and depriving them of their most basic right to sustainable development. His delegation urged Member States to take note of Israel's attempt to cover up its crimes by exploiting development issues.

*The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.*